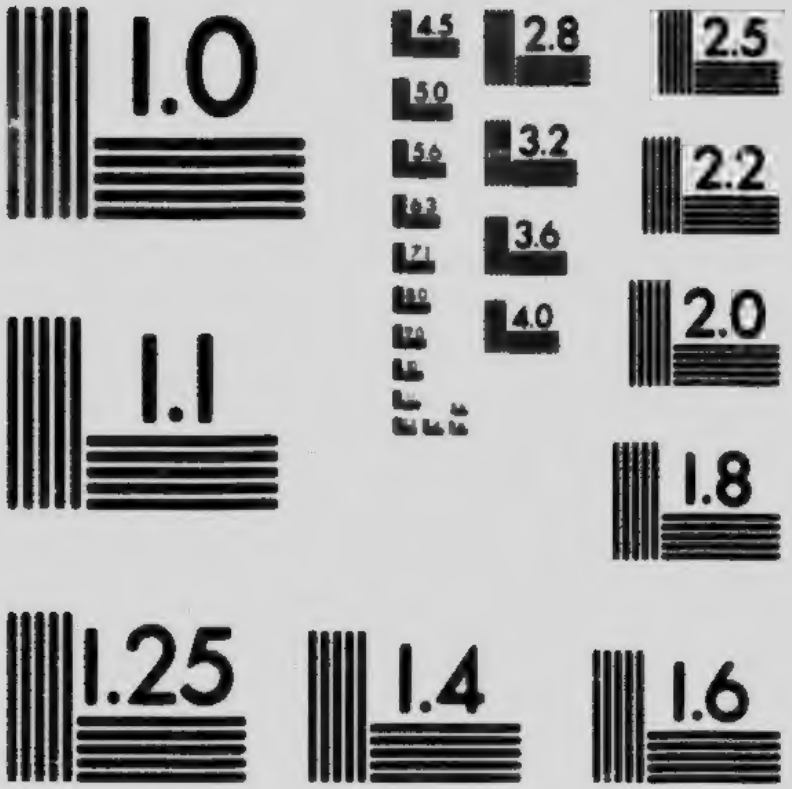

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THE PHARMACOPOEIA OF A BOTANICAL PHYSICIAN LATER

BY THE HON. WILLIAM RENWICK RIDDELL

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The Pharmacopoeia of a Botanical Physician Later.

By The Hon. William Renwick Riddell, B.Sc., B.A.

(Read 14th January 1915.)

In a paper entitled "The Pharmacopoeia of a Botanical Physician Eighty Years Ago," read before this Society 13th November 1913,[1] I enumerated the remedies recommended by Samuel Thomson, founder of the Thomsonian System of Medicine, as found in a publication of 1832. He failed of recognition by the Regular Profession, but had many disciples. They took the title, T.P. (Thomsonian Practitioner), and had no little vogue throughout New England, New York, and many other parts of the Union. As was to be expected, they did not confine themselves to the remedies recommended by their master, but discovered others, chiefly botanical, either in substitution of or in addition to the original.

[1] See page 226 of this volume.

In 1842 was published a 12mo volume at Bennington, Vermont, entitled:

THE

BOOK OF HEALTH

OR

THOMSONIAN THEORY AND PRACTICE OF MEDICINE

INCLUDING THE LATEST VIEWS OF PHYSIOLOGY, PATHOLOGY AND THERAPEUTICS

BY

F. K. ROBERTSON, T.P.

Licentiate of the N.Y.S. Thomsonian Medical Society and Lecturer on Medical Science

ALSO

DESCRIPTIONS OF DISEASE, MEDICAL PRACTICE AND MATERIA MEDICA

By SILAS WILCOX, T.P.

Licentiate of the Vt. S. Thomsonian Medical Society

Designed for Every Body

BENNINGTON

PRINTED BY

J. I. C. & A. S. C. COOK

1843

I do not say anything about the views expressed in that work on Physiology, etc., but pay attention only to the Materia Medica.

It will be seen from the list given below how far the Thomsonians had got beyond Thomson; indeed, the authors do not hesitate to say that he may be wrong.

Not much attention is paid by these authors to the Courses of Physic upon which Thomson laid so much stress, although formulae are given for his Six Numbers: No. 1, Lobelia in one form or another; No. 2, Capsicum or Black Pepper, etc., in tincture; No. 3, Bayberry, Sumac, etc., as an astringent; No. 4, Golden Seal, etc., for Bitters; No. 5, [illegible]ar, Bayberry, etc., as a stomachic; No. 6, Myrrh and Capsicum in tincture (still met with as Tr. Caps. Co.). Formulae are given also for "the Thomsonian Panacea,"

Tonic Composition, Diaphoretic Composition, Anti-Dyspeptic Conserve or Bread of Life, Dyspeptic Powders, etc., etc.

But the more usual course is to prescribe one or more plants for each particular disease.

Below will be found particularised the medicines employed. Where the qualities of the plant as given are the same as those given in the earlier work, I do not set them out here.

It will be seen that the Vermont practitioners do not employ Nos. 8, 13, 16, 17, 25, 27, 28, 29, 33, 34, 36, 40, 41, 48, 54 of Thomson's list, and add 67 of their own, making a total of 113 native plants in their pharmacopoeia. They also considerably enlarge the list of exotic plants, as well as of animal and mineral products. They excuse the use of sulphuric acid and Glauber's salts in case of lead poisoning thus: "Let it not be supposed that these articles are opposed to a *natural practice*; for they contain nothing that is not found in the ultimate elements of the human body, and are not radically poisonous; besides, to arrest a deadly chemical agent in the body, it is not absurd to use some more mild chemical substances as a counter agent."

The following list gives all medicines mentioned in the entire work:—

(*N.B.*—In this list all numbers from 1 to 58 inclusive are to be found mentioned in the work by Samuel Thomson, published at Hamilton, Upper Canada, in 1832. All those above 58, and also such of those in the former list as are not enclosed in parentheses, are to be found mentioned in The Book of Health, by Robertson and Wilcox, published at Bennington, Vermont, in 1843. The names in italics are those used by the authors.)

RANUNCULACEAE.—1. *Golden Seal*, Hydrastis Canadensis, "a good bitter tonic, slightly laxative, the root."

59. *Goldthread*, Coptis trifolia, a tonic and astringent (the root only is used), administered in Scarlet Fever, etc.

60. *Black Cohosh*, Cimicifuga racemosa (called Macrotys racemosa in this work), "the root is aromatic and stimulating; loosens the lung and vomits; the leaves are bitter and cause sneezing."

Magnoliaceae.—61. *White-wood*, Liriodendron tulipifera: "An active tonic, good for Hysteria. The bark."

Nymphaeaceae. — 2. *White Pond Lily*, Nymphaea odorata or N. tuberosa, the root used as an astringent.

Papaveraceae. — 62. *Celandine*, Chelidonium majus. Used in a tincture for Ringworm and Tetters, also to promote the secretions of the Liver.

63. *Bloodroot*, Sanguinaria Canadensis, an ingredient in Pulmonary Balsam, an emetic, made into a salve with beef's gall for Cancer, as a powder sprinkled on ulcers and specific sores, and snuffed up for Polypus and Catarrh. It also removes proud flesh and is good for Cough and Croup.

Cruciferae.—3. *Mustard*, Brassica nigra.

4. *Horseradish*, Nasturtium Armoracia.

64. *Raddish*, Raphanus sativus, juice used for renal calculi.

65. *Cabbage*, Brassica oleracea, preventative of and a remedy for scurvy.

66. *Scurvy Grass*, Barbarea praecox, preventative of and a remedy for scurvy.

Tiliaceae. -67. *Basswood*, Tilia Americana. Wilted leaves applied in Erysipelas.

Linaceae.—68. *Flaxseed* (*linseed*), Linum usitatissimum. For poultices and mucilaginous tea

Geraniaceae.—69. *Wood Sorrel*, Oxalis acetosella, the inspissated juice used as a vegetable caustic for cancers and tumors.

70. *Cranesbill*, Geranium maculatum, an ingredient in Dysentery Powder, given as an emetic in mineral poisoning and as an enema in Flooding.

Rutaceae.—5. *Prickly Ash*, Zanthoxylum Americanum (called here Xanthoxylon fraxineum), a fine diffusable stimulant, without producing much heat — sweating, quieting and purifying—the bark and berries.

71. *Rue*, Ruta graveolens, an ingredient in nerve ointment.

72. *Lemon*, Citrus Limonium, used in lemonade as a cooling and acid drink.

Anacardiaceae. — 6. *Sumac*, Rhus typhina or R. aromatica—in this work the species R. glabra (here called glabrum) is specified. It is very widely used and in almost all kinds of diseases.

CELASTRACEAE. — 73. *Bittersweet*, Celastrus scandens, "the bark of the root makes a very valuable ointment for swellings," and is also an ingredient in the Nerve Ointment.

SAPINDACEAE.—74. *Striped Maple*, Acer Pennsylvanicum, wilted leaves applied in Erysipelas.

LEGUMINOSAE.—7. *Red Clover*, Trifolium pratense.

75. *Cassia* (or *Quassia*), Cassia Marylandica, an ingredient in wine bitters and given for suppression and chlorosis.

76. *Wild Indigo*, Baptisia tinctoria, "makes an excellent poultice to prevent mortification and for ulcers—the bark of the root."

ROSACEAE.—Rose family proper. (8. *Evan Root*, Geum rivale.)

9. *Red Raspberry*, Rubus triflorus or R. strigosus.

77. *Blackberry*, R. villosus, the root of which is used in making dysentery powder.

78. *White Strawberry*, Fragaria Virginiana (var. alba) as a diuretic, the vine as one ingredient in a drink given in Renal calculus.

79. *Roseleaves*, Rosa (different species), ingredient in eye water.

The Pear Subdivision. 10. *Peach*, Prunus Persica.

11. *Wild Cherry*, Prunus Pennsylvanica.

80. *Black Cherry*, Prunus serotina, bark used in spice bitters, dysentery powder and fruit in Improved Rheumatic drops.

81. *Apple*, Pyrus Malus, sour apples roasted are given as a drink in Typhus Fever.

HAMAMELACEAE.—12. *Witch Hazel*, Hamamelis Virginica.

HALORAGIDACEAE.—82. *Marestail*, Hippuris vulgaris, a snuff made of this will cure nose bleeding immediately.

UMBELLIFERAE. (13. *Archangel*, Archangelica atropurpurea.)

83. *Carrots*, Daucus Carota, applied as a poultice in abscesses.

84. *Parsley*, Carum Petroselinum (Petroselinum sativum), the root an ingredient in Pulmonary Balsam and used as a diuretic.

ARALIACEAE.—14. *Gensang*, Aralia quinquefolia, called in this work Panax quinquefolia, "nervine and tonic, good in dyspepsia, debility and irritability of the nerves."

85. *Spikenard*, Aralia racemosa, used in making Pulmonary Balsam, "healing, purifying, good for the lungs. Root and berries."

86. *American Sarsaparilla*, Aralia nudicaulis, used in making Alterative Syrup (Sarsaparilla Syrup), given for Tetters and specific disorders.

CORNACEAE.—87. *Boxwood* or *Rose Willow*, Cornus florida, flowers or bark used in making Female Restorative, "tonic and strengthening, a substitute for Peruvian bark, valuable in female sickness."

88. *Green-osier*, Cornus sericea (Kinnikinnik), made into a tea for bathing inflamed eyes, a poultice for cancer and an ingredient in the Alterative Syrup. "Heating and purifying, good for sore eyes, stops vomiting. The bark."

CAPRIFOLIACEAE.—89. *Elder*, Sambucus Canadensis, or S. pubens, bark used in making Diuretic Cordial, flowers in Alterative Syrup.

90. *High Cranberry*, Viburnum Opulus (called V. Oxeconus in this work), bark used in making "Mothers' Relief," an ecbolic, "relaxes spasms."

RUBIACEAE.—15. *Clivers* or *Cleavers*, Galium Aparine, "an active diuretic; very good in Strangury, gravel and dropsy."

91. *Partridge Berry*, Mitchella repens, the bark for renal calculi and as an ecbolic.

VALERIANACEAE.—(16. *American Valerian*, Valeriana sylvatica.)

COMPOSITAE.—(17. *Squaw-weed*, Senecio aureus.)

18. *Elecampane*, Inula Helenium, "tonic and expectorant, very good in consumption, the root."

19. *Mayweed*, Maruta Cotula (called in this work Anthemis Cotula), generally called Smartweed.

20. *Wormwood*, Artemisia Absinthium.

21. *Tanzy*, Tanacetum vulgare.

22. *Chamomile*, Anthemis nobilis.

23. *Burdock*, Lappa officinalis.

24. *Thoroughwort* is in this work called *Boneset*, Eupatorium perfoliatum, an emetic or used as a tea to induce perspiration, "a valuable universal medicine, a hot infusion sweats and vomits, cold it is a laxative."

(25. *Featherfew*, Chrysanthemum Parthenium.)

26. *Golden Rod*, Solidago nemoralis, called in this work S. odora (*i.e.* odorata), made into a tea for headaches.

(27. *Wild Lettuce*, Lactuca Canadensis.)

(28. *Bitter Thistle*, Silybum Marianum.)

(29. *Cardis benedictus*, Cnicus benedictus.)

92. *Coltsfoot*, Tussilago Farfara, an ingredient in Catarrh Snuff.

LOBELIACEAE. — 30. *Lobelia*, Lobelia inflata, used in practically every disease as an emetic, etc., the sheet anchor of the Thomsonian system.

ERICACEAE.—31. *Pipsissewa*, Chimaphila umbellata.

93. *Wintergreen*, Gaultheria procumbens, useful for diseases of the Urinary organs, dropsy, cancers and scrofula. The whole plant. Young plant used in making Spice Bitters.

94. *Uva Ursi*, Arctostaphylos Uva-ursi, for Inflammation of the Kidneys.

95. *Cranberry*, Vaccinium, different species. The juice made into a drink in Typhus Fever and Inflammation of the Liver.

PLANTAGINACEAE.—96. *Plantain*, Plantago major, the wilted leaves applied in Erysipelas.

SCROPHULARIACEAE. — 32. *Balmony* or *Bitter Root*, Chelone glabra, in very wide use. (See also No. 126 below.)

(34. *Mullen*, Verbascum Thapsus.)

PLUMBAGINACEAE. — (33. Marsh Rosemary, Statice Limonium.)

VERBENACEAE. — 35. *Blue Vervine*, Verbena hastata, "tonic and emetic, good in ague and fever and coughs."

(36. *White Vervine*, Verbena urticifolia.)

LABIATAE.—37. *Spearmint*, Mentha viridis, "diffusible stimulant, diuretic and aromatic, makes a good drink in colds and inflammatory diseases. The oil relieves piles."

38. *Peppermint*, Mentha piperita, "stimulant and aromatic, makes a fine stimulating drink for cold; essence on sugar relieves pain in stomach and bowels."

39. *Pennyroyal*, Hedeoma pulegioides, "stimulant, aromatic and emmenagogue."

(40. *Summer Savory*, Satureia hortensis.)

(41. *Horehound*, Marrubium vulgare.)

97. *Sage*, Salvia officinalis, used for making a tea, useful in pleurisy, inflammation of the bowels and measles.

98. *Origanum*, Origanum Majorana, oil used in inflammatory and chronic rheumatism, an ingredient in Rheumatic Drops and Liniment.

99. *Rosemary*, Rosmarinus officinalis, used in making Rheumatic Liniment.

100. *Scullcap*, Scutellaria lateriflora; an ingredient in Wine Bitters, stimulating Tea, Nerve Powder, given as a drink in Lockjaw and Fever.

101. *Balm*, Monarda didyma, made into a tea (Oswego tea), for inflammation of the Lungs.

102. *Dandelion*, Taraxacum Dens-leonis (called Leontodon Taraxacum in this work), the inspissated juice administered in Dropsy, Jaundice, Hypochondria and Complaints of the Liver.

103. *Catnip*, Nepeta Cataria, produces sweating and expels wind, a valuable medicine for children.

BORRAGINACEAE.—104. *Comfrey*, Symphytum officinale; used as an ingredient in making Pulmonary Balsam.

SOLANACEAE.—42. *Capsicum*, Capsicum annuum, used almost universally.

43. *Bitter Sweet*, Solanum Dulcamara, an ingredient in Nerve Ointment.

APOCYNACEAE. — 105. *Indian Hemp*, Apocynum cannabinum, "diuretic, slightly laxative and antispasmodic, good in dropsy, the extract is said to cure fits and promote the absorption of tumors; relaxing and quieting to the system."

ASCLEPIADACEAE.—44. *Milkweed*, Asclepias (Syriaca it is called in this work), "it promotes perspiration and urine; good in gravel, dropsy, fever and inflammations."

106. *White root* or *pleurisy root*, Asclepias tuberosa; an ingredient in Cough or Fever Powder and given in Dropsy of the Chest, Apoplexy, Bleeding from the Stomach, Inflammation of the Stomach, Low Fever, etc.

ARISTOLOCHIACEAE.—45. *Snakeroot*, Asarum Canadense, "the root is aromatic and stimulating, loosens the lungs and vomits, the leaves are bitter and cause sneezing."

107. *Virginia Snakeroot*, Aristolochia serpentaria, "sweating and strengthening."

CHENOPODIACEAE.—108. *Wormseed* or *Oak of Jerusalem*, Chenopodium ambrosioides, var. Anthelminticum is meant.

(C. Botrys is more usually known as Jerusalem oak however.) The flowers, seed or oil used as an anthelmintic.

POLYGONACEAE. — 46. *Yellow Dock*, Rumex Crispus, poultice for Tetters, Cancer and Itch; also used in making alterative Syrup.

109. *Smartweed*, Polygonum aviculare (P. punctatum in this work), "stimulates, equalizes the circulation and prevents mortification, an effectual fomentation for bruises and inflammations."

LAURACEAE.—110. *Sassafras* (called in this work Laurus sassafras), Sassafras officinale, used in making Tonic Composition, Alterative Syrup and Strengthening Plasters; "good for rheumatic, scrofulous and eruptive diseases, The bark of the root. The pith infused in rose water makes a fine eye water."

URTICACEAE.—47. *Slippery Elm*, Ulmus fulva, used as mucilaginous drink, also bark powdered dry.

111. *Hops*, Humulus Lupulus, made into a decoction and applied as a wash, a fomentation in White Swelling. Spasms, Convulsions, Inflammation of Kidneys, Stomach or Bowels, Pleurisy, etc.

JUGLANDACEAE.—(48. *Butternut*, Juglans cinerea.)

112. *Hickory*, Carya alba, the lye evaporated to dryness and pulverized, used "to remove Fungous Flesh, Fistules, Cancers, etc."

CUPULIFERAE.—113. *White Oak*, Quercus alba, bark for astringent decoctions and plasters, also an ingredient in Dysentery Powder.

114. *Red Oak*, Quercus rubra, the lye from the bark boiled down and made into a plaster for Cancer (Gallnuts or Nutgalls may also be mentioned here, an ingredient in Pile Ointment).

115. *Beech*, Fagus ferruginea, wilted leaves applied in Erysipelas.

MYRICACEAE.—49. *Bayberry* or *Candleberry*, Myrica cerifera, used very extensively.

50. *Meadow Fern*, Comptonia asplenifolia. (See No 116.)

116. *Meadow Fern*. This name is in this work given to the Sweet Gale, Myrica Gale, which is said to be "healing and purifying. An ointment made from the burs, cures Itch, Saltrheum and Tetters, and the decoction may be drunk."

BETULACEAE.—51. *Black Birch*, Betula lenta; used as an ingredient in the Tonic Composition and Cholera Syrup.

SALICACEAE.—52. *White Poplar*, Populus alba.

53. *Stinking Poplar*, Populus balsamifera. [*Note.*—The species is not mentioned in this work; "poplar" is widely prescribed.]

(54. *Balm of Gilead*, P. balsamifera, var. Canadensis.)

CONIFERAE.—55. *Balsam Fir*, Abies balsamea.

56. *Hemlock*, Abies Canadensis: Bark an ingredient in Dysentery Powder, Rheumatic Drops and Tonic Composition as an Astringent and for topical application in Inflammatory Rheumatism.

117. *Cedar*, Thuja occidentalis, given for Rheumatism. (See No. 128 below.)

ARACEAE.—57. *Skunk Cabbage*, Symplocarpus foetidus (called in this work Ictodes foetida), "Good for Coughs, Asthma, Spasms and Worms."

118. *Wild Turnip*, Arisaema triphyllum, an ingredient in Pulmonary Balsam, and used as an expectorant in Inflammation of the Lungs.

ORCHIDACEAE. — 119. *Lady's Slipper*, Cypripedium pubescens, an ingredient in the Bread of Life (anti-dyspeptic conserve), the root is an ingredient in the Nerve Powder, a tea made from it is administered in simple Inflammatory Fever and Locked Jaw.

120. *Crawley Root*, Corallorhiza odontorhiza, "a nervine and antispasmodic, the roots with white root, cayenne and lobelia make an excellent fever powder."

LILIACEAE.—58. *Wake Robin*, Trillium erythrocarpum, used in making Cough or Fever Powder.

121. *Beth*, Trillium latifolium (says this work), an ingredient in the Female Restorative and given in Uterine Hemorrhage, etc., "a good astringent and tonic, useful for debility, coughs, fluor albus, etc. The root."

122. *Unicorn*, called in this work Helonias dioicia, probably H. bullata, an ingredient in Mothers' Relief, Wine Bitters, Female Restorative, administered for Chlorosis, etc.

123. *Solomon's Seal*, Polygonatum giganteum (called P. multiflorum in this work, but that species is cultivated), "strengthening, excellent in female weakness. The root." (See No. 127 below.)

GRAMINEAE.—124. *Oats*, Avena sativa, a fomentation for pleurisy.

FILICES.—125. *Brake*, Pteris aquilina, used in making Nerve Ointment.

The identification of the above species is fairly certain, but there are some plants named in this work which are difficult to identify.

Queen of the Meadow is probably Thoroughwort or Boneset, Eupatorium perfoliatum.

126. *Culver's Physic* or *Black root* is probably Veronica Virginica of the Figwort Family. It is dried and pulverized and with partially evaporated ox-gall made into Bile or Peristaltic Pills.

127. *Saffron* is probably the American saffron, Colchicum autumnale, of the Lily Family; made into a drink for Measles.

128. *Juniper* is probably Juniperus communis, of the Cypress family of Conifers. The berries are given as a diuretic in cases of Strangury.

In exotic plants, in addition to bitter almonds, ginger, black pepper, cloves and myrrh, mentioned in the earlier work, this work mentions copaiva, aniseed, cinnamon, allspice, guiacum, Peruvian bark, liquorice root.

Vegetable products named are lye, sugar, molasses, vinegar, sweet or olive oil, castor oil, Indian meal, bran-bread, camphor, rice, white turpentine, spirits of turpentine, Burgundy pitch, resin, India rubber, lemon juice, metheglin, charcoal, yeast, burnt sponge, and spunk (applied burning to a cancer to induce suppuration).

Animal products are not unknown, milk, buttermilk, salt butter, honey, bees' wax, a tea made of the honey bee (recommended as a diuretic in case of stone strangury, etc.), lard, mutton tallow, oxgall, deer's horn; and a few mineral products, lime (quick and slaked), lime water, prepared chalk, chloride of lime, caustive (caustic) potash, sulphur, magnesia, Glauber's salts, alum, ammonia, sal ammoniac, saltpetre, nitrous ether, cream of tartar, calcined oyster shells, sulphuric acid, copperas, soda, salaeratus; while alcohol, brandy and gin are used, the former two as a remedy for poisoning by essential oils and in making Improved Rheumatic Drops; the gin as a diuretic.